



Making the Most of Your Events and Exhibitions

An overview of how to maximise your Return on Marketing Investment from Exhibitions

This is a guest article by **Alto Marketing Limited**:



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Document ref: GJKB022

Making the Most of Your Events and Exhibitions

Maximising your ROI

Exhibitions form a major part of any marketing programme. They are extremely valuable and present an excellent opportunity to communicate a company's expertise, technology or product offering to a captive audience. Exhibitions can also provide the perfect forum for face-to-face meetings with existing and prospective customers, and facilitate the collection of those all important sales leads. However, as there are many relevant conferences and exhibitions in any one year, it is no surprise that they can consume a large proportion of an organisation's marketing budget. The need to maximise the effectiveness of these events is widely accepted but given the current financial climate, this may now move further up the agenda. With some predicted cuts in travel budgets, we believe using an integrated programme of marketing activities to target attendees will be an absolute priority.

When organising events, there are a number of activities to be considered that can improve visibility and lead generation. Splitting these marketing activities into 3 categories – pre-show, on-site, and post-show – can greatly help with the focus, planning, and budgeting. See below some suggestions for making the most of your exhibition planning.

Pre-show

Planning ahead

Pre-show planning is key and this means working at least 6 months in advance. Show selection may be determined by the:

- Suitability of the show - for a particular business/product area/product launch
- Delegate group – do they constitute a key target audience?
- Association with a relevant conference organiser/schedule
- Media attendance - would this be a good place for a product launch/press event?
- Potential to make an 'IMPACT' and 'BE SEEN'

During this early stage of planning and exhibition booking, you may also consider other options that allow you to present your scientific and technical expertise to an extended yet targeted audience:

- Booth position
- Workshops
- Presentations
- Posters

Raising awareness with pre-show promotion

Build up to the event and let people know you will be exhibiting. Use a selection of activities to drive people to your booth:

- PR
- Targeting of show previews
- Solus emailers (to internal, third party and/or pre-registered delegate lists)
- Sponsored show specific e-alerts

On-site

Increasing booth traffic

Make an impact, raise your profile and increase your visibility. There are a number of tools available to do this, which can be integrated to improve on-site brand awareness and increase quality lead generation:

- Show sponsorship packages include a number of marketing aids and materials (i.e. pre-show emails, online coverage/ads, on-site signage, delegate bag inserts). Some shows will also be associated with societies/publications which offer other avenues of promotion
- Competitions – if sufficiently promoted using pre-show emailers and/or an on-site delegate bag insert, for example, can increase booth visits, and data capture. Obviously the contacts gathered can be qualified and added to your database working with your sales team, and used (if permitted) for further marketing promotions
- Branding items – low cost branded items as booth giveaways
- Stand guides/booklets – these can provide information about the company, its products, on-site presentations/workshops, the exhibition itself and the location. To be used for the duration of the show to increase visibility among delegates and/or the press
- Booth tours & product demos – useful for companies with larger booths with many products on display or to really push a specific product or technology. They can also work to attract more attention and consequentially more people to the booth

Product launch

If planning a major product launch, an exhibition that is well attended and boasts a good media presence can provide the perfect platform. Organising a high profile launch event targeting both your existing customer base, a wider prospective customer list and the press, can get you more attention and create a real buzz at the show.

Customer events/dinners

Whether to introduce a new product, reiterate your expertise and company offering, or simply to show appreciation for your valued and long term-customer relationships, a customer lunch, evening drinks, buffet or dinner event can be very effective and can provide a more relaxed forum for networking.

Spend time with the media

Media are one of your key audiences. We believe that building strong relationships with the media can provide long term benefits for both parties. Getting to know the media and allowing the media to really get to know you can without doubt aid this process, as well as improve the uptake of PR and create ongoing article/interview opportunities. As such, we believe regular media liaison is key to a good PR and marketing campaign but we would also recommend advertising support. On-site media activities will vary depending on the significance of your 'NEWS' (product launch, company announcement (merger/acquisition) etc):

- One-to-one press meetings – this allows editors to find out more about a new product or service offering and talk to relevant personnel and senior management. This can also be tied in with a booth tour and product demo
- Press conference – for a significant product launch or corporate announcement where presentations can be followed by a question and answer type format to encourage more dialogue between company and press
- Press lunch/dinner – this is a more personnel and relaxed approach. Editors can gather information on your products or services but additionally, can really get to understand the company ethos and its personnel in a more informal setting

Organising an event to take place just before or during a key exhibition enables editors to maximise their valuable time. Our experience has shown us that with appropriate forward planning, it is possible to get editors to arrive a day early allowing you to have their undivided attention for a considerable period of time.

Post-show

Maintaining marketing momentum

When efficiently planned and executed, post-show marketing will maintain visibility and lead generation. Frequency and repetition of a message using the media, really are key to the success of a campaign and improved brand recognition. Utilising post-show promotion to target those who attended the show (through targeting the leads/contacts captured on-site or via delegate list rental) can help to achieve this. Additionally, with potential budget restrictions predicted, we have yet to see how this may affect exhibition attendance in the coming months. Hence looking at parallel activities to target those unable to attend the show may also be of benefit:

- Virtual press launches
- Webinars – to target press & prospective customers
- Direct mail – print
- Follow-up solus emailer(s)
- PR and post-show article placement
- Online viral marketing campaign
- Advertising
- Other lead generation activities
- Sales team promos/incentives

Exhibition planning at Alto Marketing is already in full swing. If you would like any advice or assistance with show targeting and selection, or further details on the tools that can be used to promote your company at these events, then please contact us on +44 (0)1489 557672 to book a more in-depth discussion.



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If in order to meet your personal and business objectives you need to recruit the best people, train and develop your existing team, develop the knowledge and skills of a key manager, raise additional funding or make an acquisition or divestiture we would like to speak with you.

If you are interested in developing your own knowledge and skill set to achieve further success and make the most of your talents with proven coaches we would like to talk.

If you are looking for your next career move or wish to have some impartial and experienced career advice we would like to hear from you

Our Customers

US companies looking to establish themselves in Europe needing to recruit and/or wanting assistance with the associated logistics.

European start up companies looking for additional funding, the recruitment of key staff or assistance with their HR processes.

Established small businesses to the largest international corporations looking to recruit train and develop their existing staff, review their HR processes or make an acquisition or divestiture.

European Distributors looking to recruit and/or train and develop their existing staff.

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